

Chicago Cultural Center

A Young Person's Guide

CHICAGO CULTURAL CENTER
78 EAST WASHINGTON STREET, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

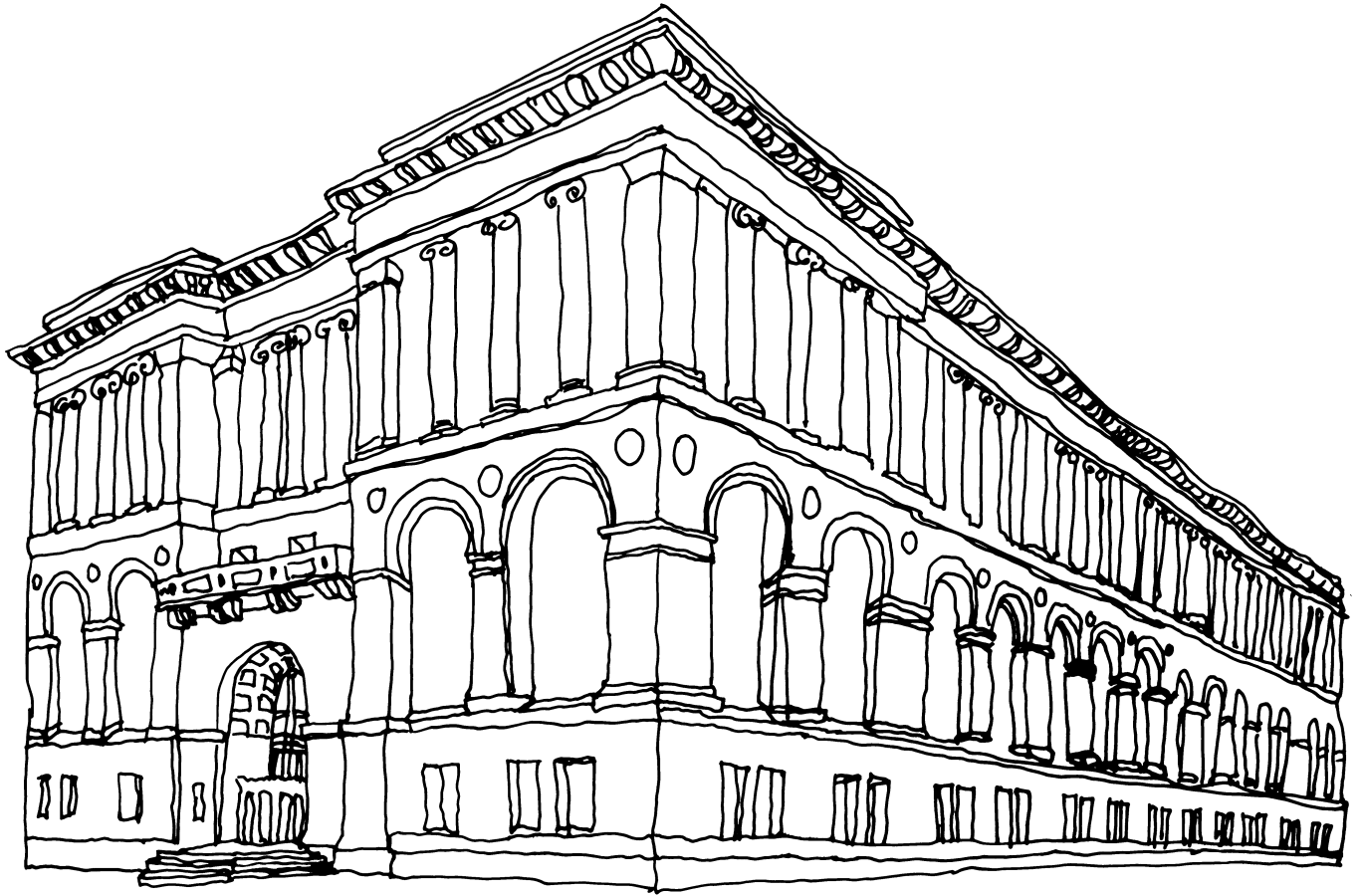


CITY OF CHICAGO
RICHARD M. DALEY, MAYOR

CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
LOIS WEISBERG, COMMISSIONER

THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF
THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES/ILLINOIS STATE MUSEUM AND THE CHICAGO CULTURAL CENTER FOUNDATION.

Welcome to the Chicago Cultural Center.



“The People’s Palace”—that’s what they called it 100 years ago!

The people who created this building a century ago wanted to build a place so beautiful that it would be a work of art in itself—unique, inspired, beautiful and made to last. They constructed a building lovely enough for a king and queen, but free and open for all the people of Chicago to enjoy. One hundred years later, the building still stands: free, open to the public, and a place for art.

Come on in and see what's inside— there's art everywhere!

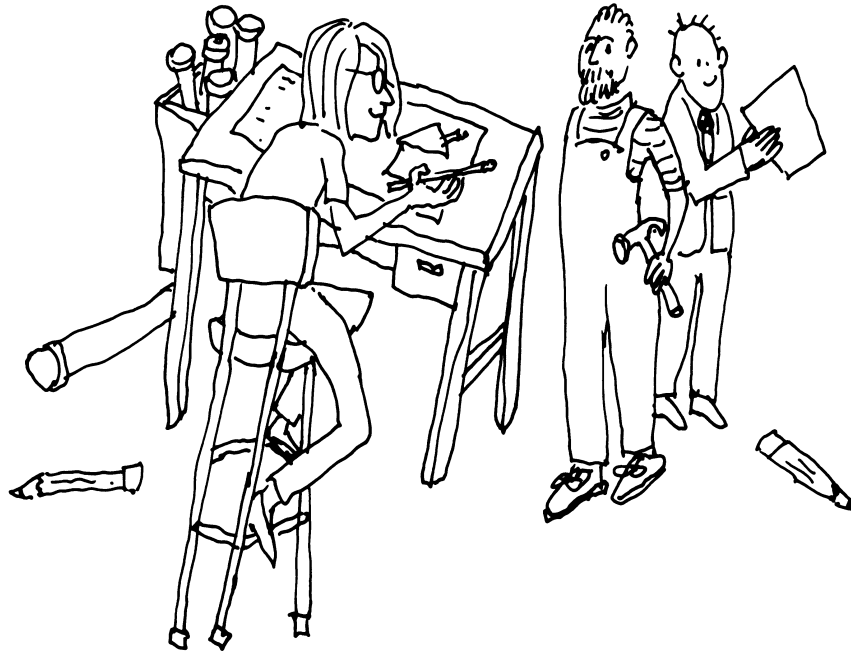


With the help of this book, you'll explore this building and learn about its architecture, its history, and the way it is used today.

The Cultural Center is bursting with activity! Concerts, art exhibitions, plays, dance performances and other cultural events are presented here for people just like you. Every day (except holidays) you'll find this wonderful building open and alive. And best of all—it's free and for you!

The Chicago Cultural Center is owned and run by the City of Chicago. That means that people who live and pay taxes in Chicago are helping to keep this building open to the public at no charge. The Chicago Cultural Center was the first free, municipal cultural center in the whole United States!

From the ground up: How buildings are made.



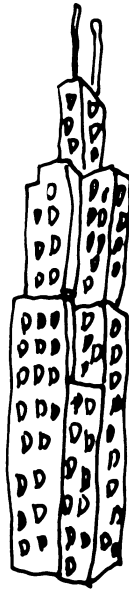
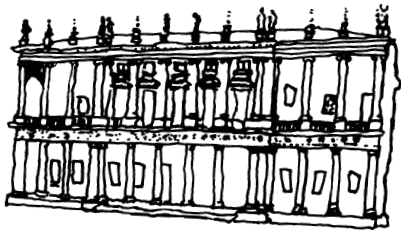
Architect

Floors, doors, windows, stairs. An architect designs a building by carefully putting together all these things and more.

Before we explore the Chicago Cultural Center, we need to know how buildings are created.

Every building is designed, inside and out, by an architect. Working closely with the people who need the building, the architect decides where the doors will be, how many floors the building will have, the material it will be made of, and how it will be decorated. The architect develops a plan which is followed carefully by a team of carpenters, craftsmen, electricians, plumbers, engineers and others. It takes hundreds of people many years of hard work to create very special, very large, or very beautiful buildings like the Chicago Cultural Center.

Why do buildings look the way they do?

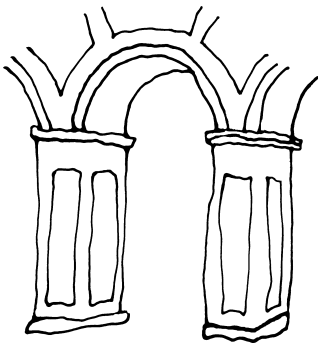


When we think about buildings, we think about different kinds of buildings and how they will be used. For example, your house does not look like a store. A store does not look like a museum. Your school does not look like a house. Can you tell how these buildings are used by looking at their shapes?

When the Cultural Center was designed, the architects and the people who would use the building decided they wanted it to look like something special, something different, something important. So they looked around for examples of special, different, important buildings that had come before. As was popular at the time, they particularly liked the buildings of ancient Greece and Rome. They admired the powerful columns of the Greek temples and were inspired by the strength of the Roman arches. These and other styles from the past became models for the design of the Cultural Center.

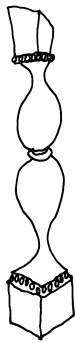
Things to look for!

Buildings are made up of different parts, and many have their own special names. As you explore the Chicago Cultural Center, you will run into some things that may be new to you. Look for these architectural elements throughout the building.



ARCH-

a curved opening that tops a doorway or a window. It looks like an upside down U.



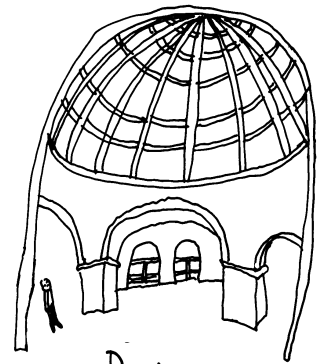
BALUSTER-

an upright, often vase-shaped, support for a rail. Line up a bunch of balusters and you'll have a kind of low fence called a balustrade. It helps to keep people from falling over a balcony or staircase.



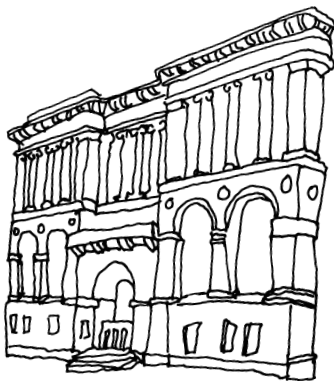
COLUMN-

a tall pole that runs from the floor up to the ceiling. A column usually consists of a base on the bottom, a shaft in the middle, and a capital on top. Columns can be plain or covered with fancy decorations.



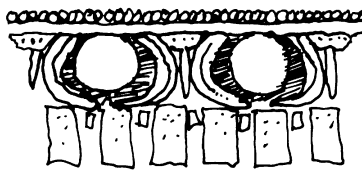
DOME-

a hemispherical roof. Cut a giant basketball in half, put it on top of a building, and you've got a dome!



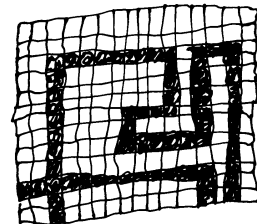
FACADE-

the front or main face of a building. The facade greets you as you approach a building.



MOLDING-

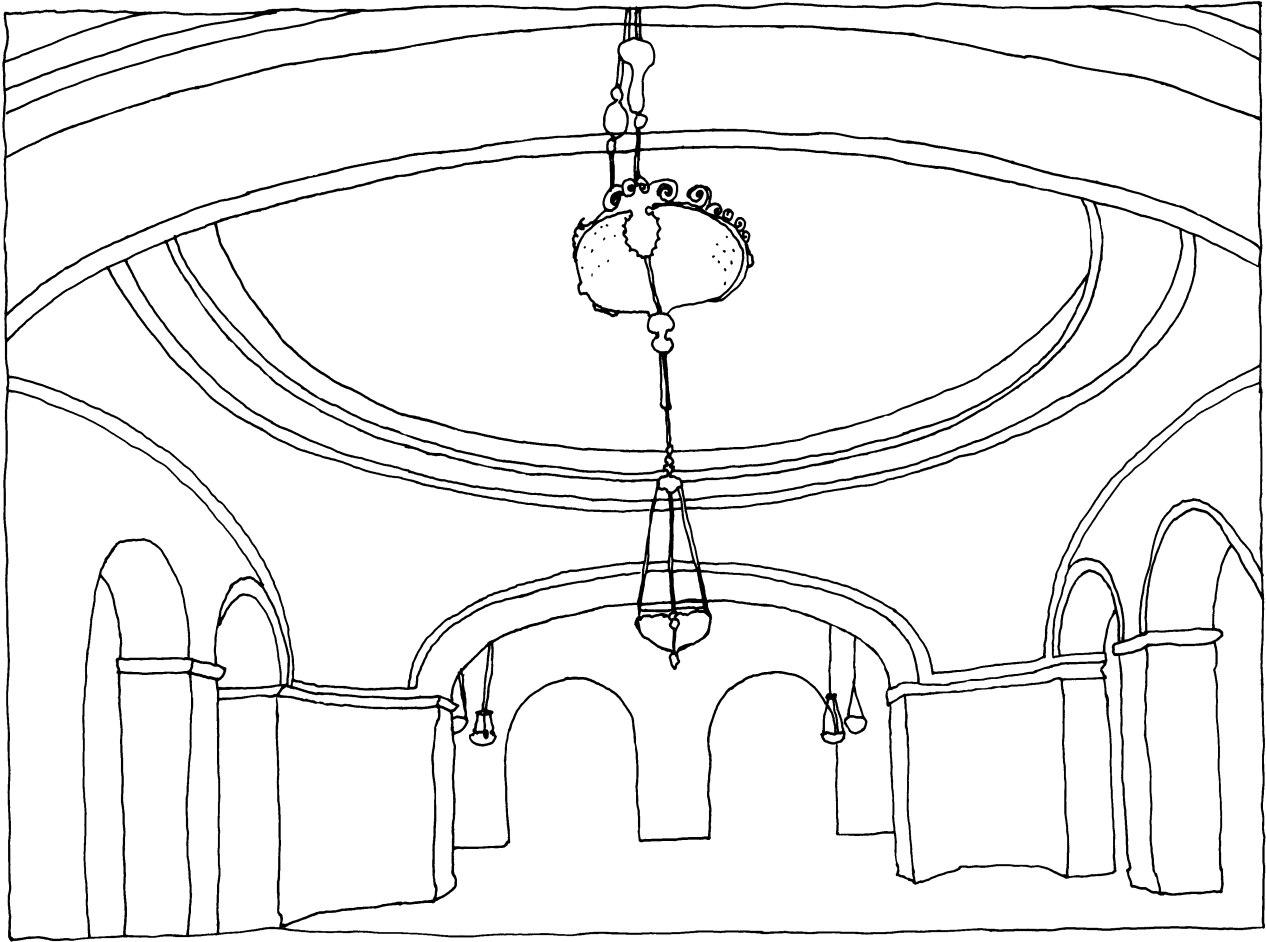
a strip of decoration for a door, a window, or a wall. At the Cultural Center, you'll find many examples of "egg and dart" molding—an egg, a dart, an egg, a dart...



MOSAIC-

a design made with tiny pieces of glass or stone used to decorate walls or floors.

Complete the room.



You can finish drawing Preston Bradley Hall using as many architectural details that appear on the previous page as you like.

If you think the room needs even more decorations, you might want to color it!

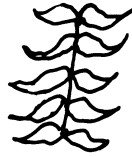
Things from the outside on the inside.

Finding natural forms in architecture.

Architects and designers often use shapes and textures that occur in nature to inspire their designs. Here are natural forms and textures that were used to decorate this building. Look for these as you walk around the Chicago Cultural Center.



PINE CONE



LEAVES



EGG



SCALLOPS
(SEASHELL)



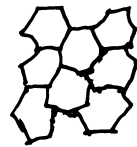
FISH
SCALES



FRUIT



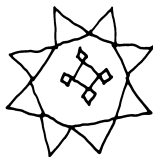
FLOWERS



HONEY
COMB



HORNS



STARS
AND
COMETS

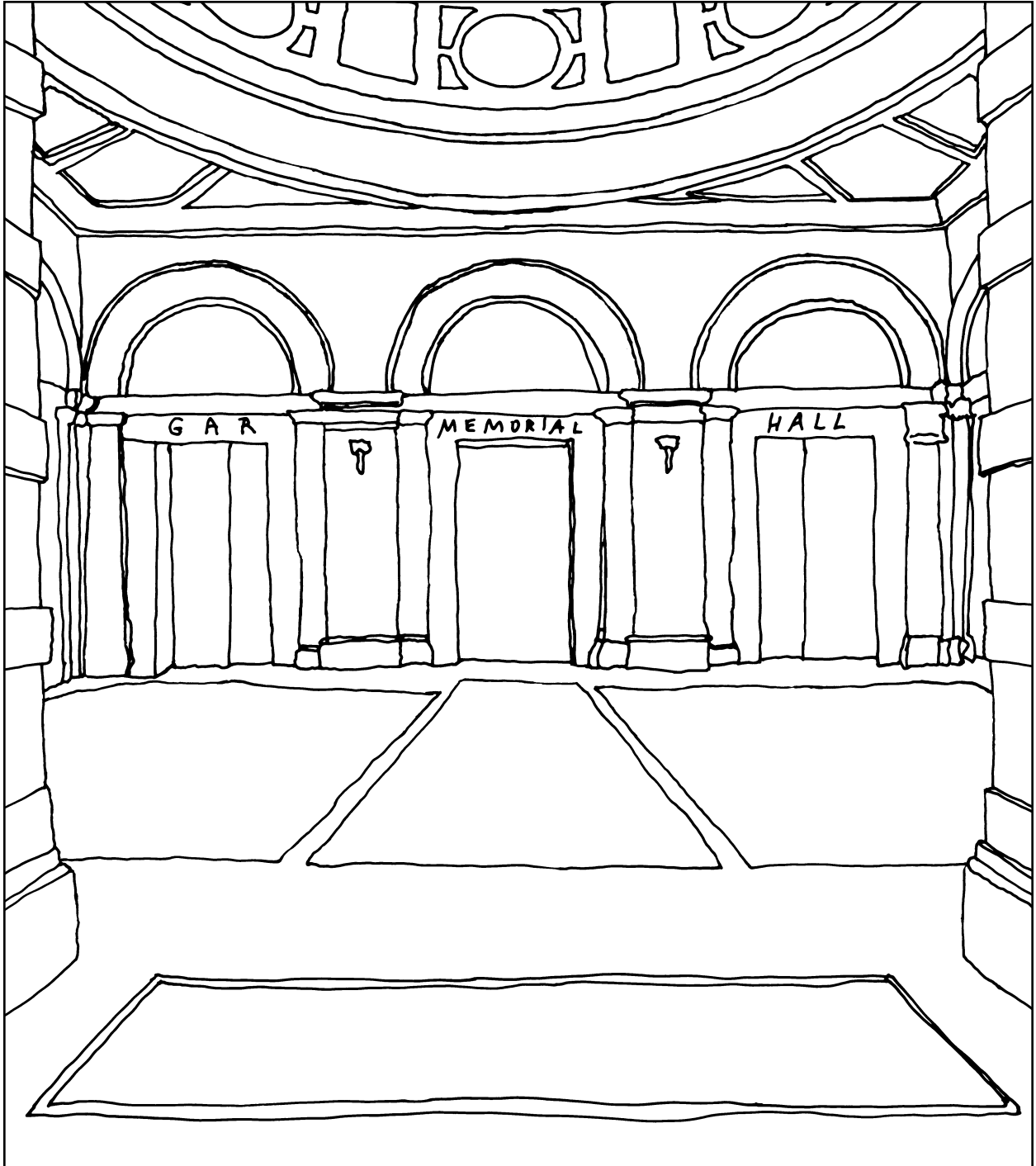


WAVES

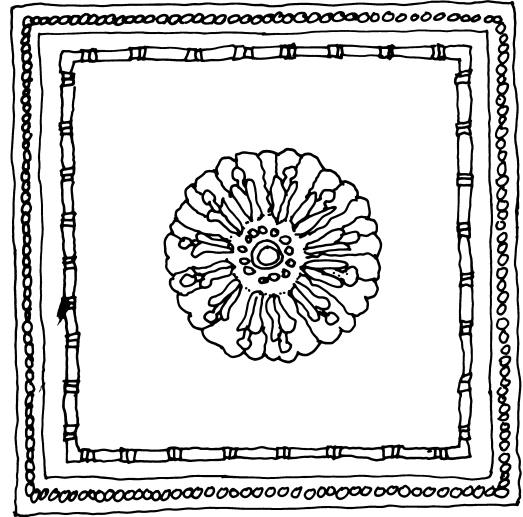


SPIDERWEB

Can you decorate this room using
four or more things from nature?

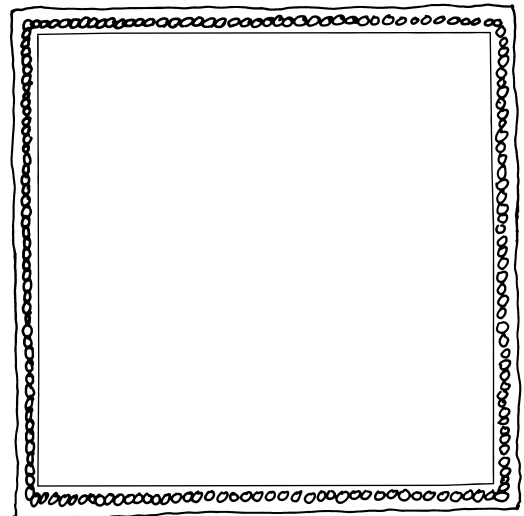
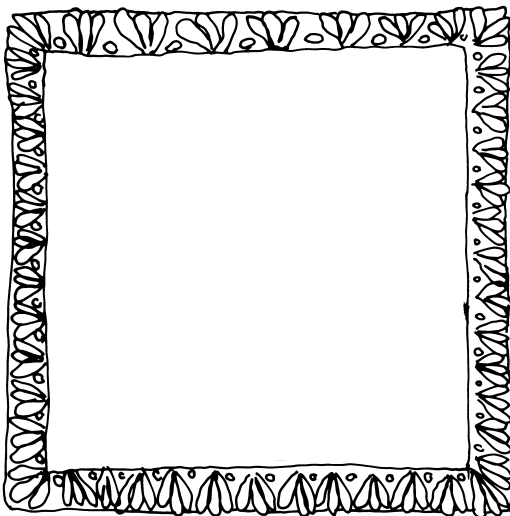


Look above you in every room you visit at the Cultural Center.



In many rooms throughout the Cultural Center, the ceilings are covered with a series of richly decorated squares. This kind of ceiling is called a coffered ceiling. The word coffer means box or chest. A coffered ceiling looks like it's covered with many fancy box tops!





Create your own coffer designs!



The Cultural Center just had a birthday: One hundred years old.



The building that we call the Chicago Cultural Center opened its doors on October 9, 1897, more than 100 years ago. When we look at a building, we need to know about the time when it was built and what was happening then.

Let's go back to when the Chicago Cultural Center was built. Of course life was very different then. If you were in Chicago, you might have had boiled lettuce with gravy for dinner, lit candles  in your home every evening, gone to school during the summer and  done your homework on a piece of slate. You might have had to wear a special hat and stand in the corner if you misbehaved. If you got stung by a bee, you would have rubbed the sting with an onion. If you got a sore throat, you would take off your sock  and wrap it around your neck, and you might have played with cast iron toys, cap guns, and  toy sailboats.

Why did Chicago need this building?



The people of Chicago needed a new library.

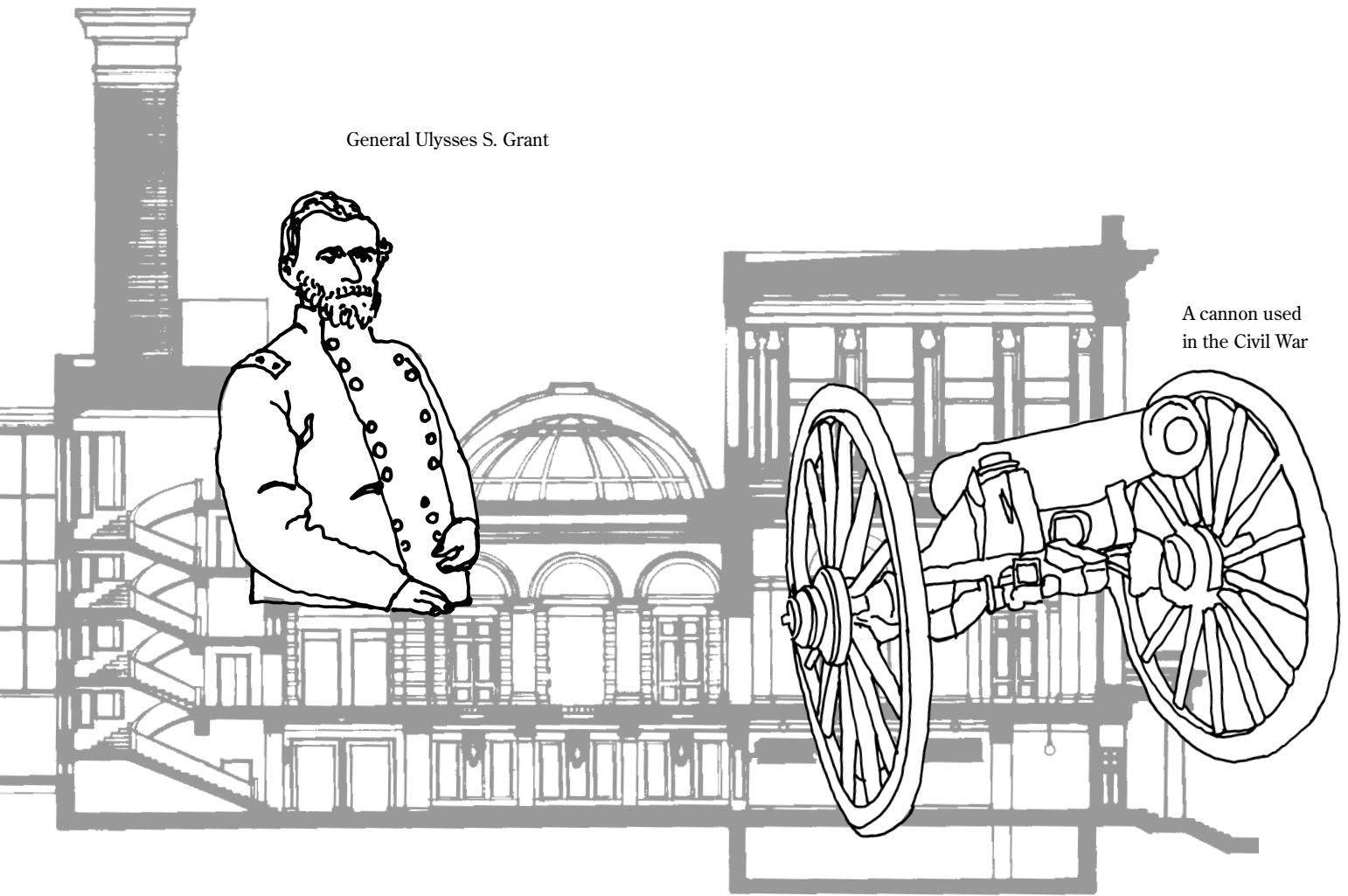
Now we know a little about what life was like when this building was made, but we still don't know why it was built.

In 1871, a fire raged for two days burning four square miles of the city of Chicago. The fire destroyed 18,000 buildings, left 100,000 people homeless and killed 250 people. News of the Great Chicago Fire quickly spread by way of newspapers, personal letters and word of mouth. Hearing about the tragedy, citizens of London, England, including Queen Victoria, collected books to replace those lost in the fire.

The people of Chicago needed an appropriate building to house their new books. This site, then called Dearborn Park, was selected for the construction of a free public library.

General Ulysses S. Grant

A cannon used
in the Civil War



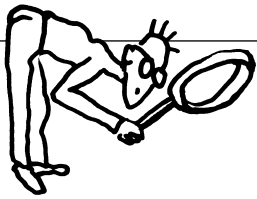
The people of Chicago needed a place to remember war veterans.

By coincidence, the State of Illinois had chosen the same location to build a memorial to honor the Grand Army of the Republic. (They were the soldiers who fought in the American Civil War.)

The city and the state agreed to put the Library and the Civil War memorial in the same building.

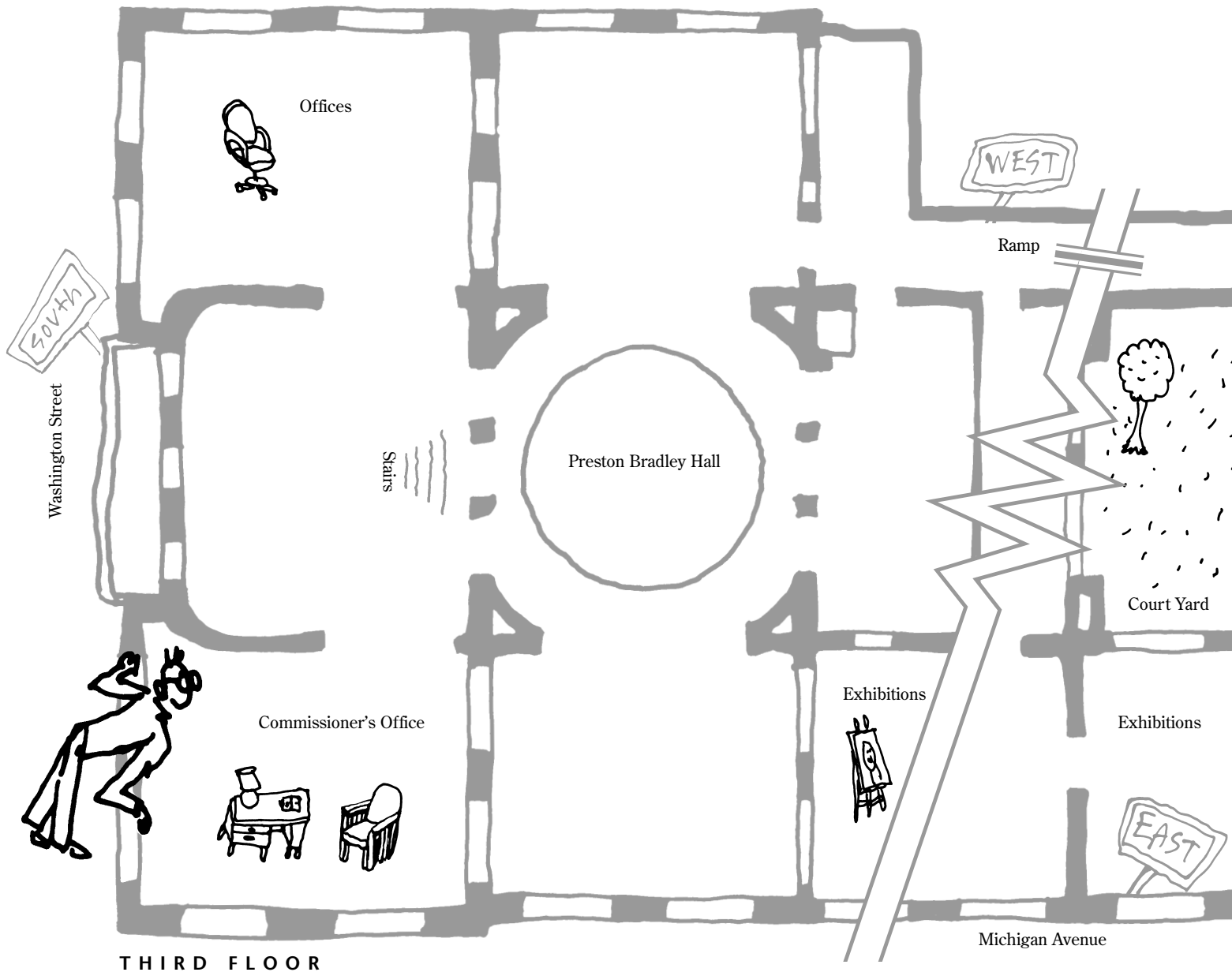
This presented a great challenge—how to design a building that would serve both purposes equally and express the unique personality of each. The answer was to create what was actually two buildings under one roof. Each organization had its own facade, its own dome, its own staircase, and even its own unique decorations.

The building is very different now. For years the Grand Army of the Republic and the Chicago Public Library shared, but the library kept getting bigger and bigger. When the new Harold Washington Library Center was built, this building became the Chicago Cultural Center.



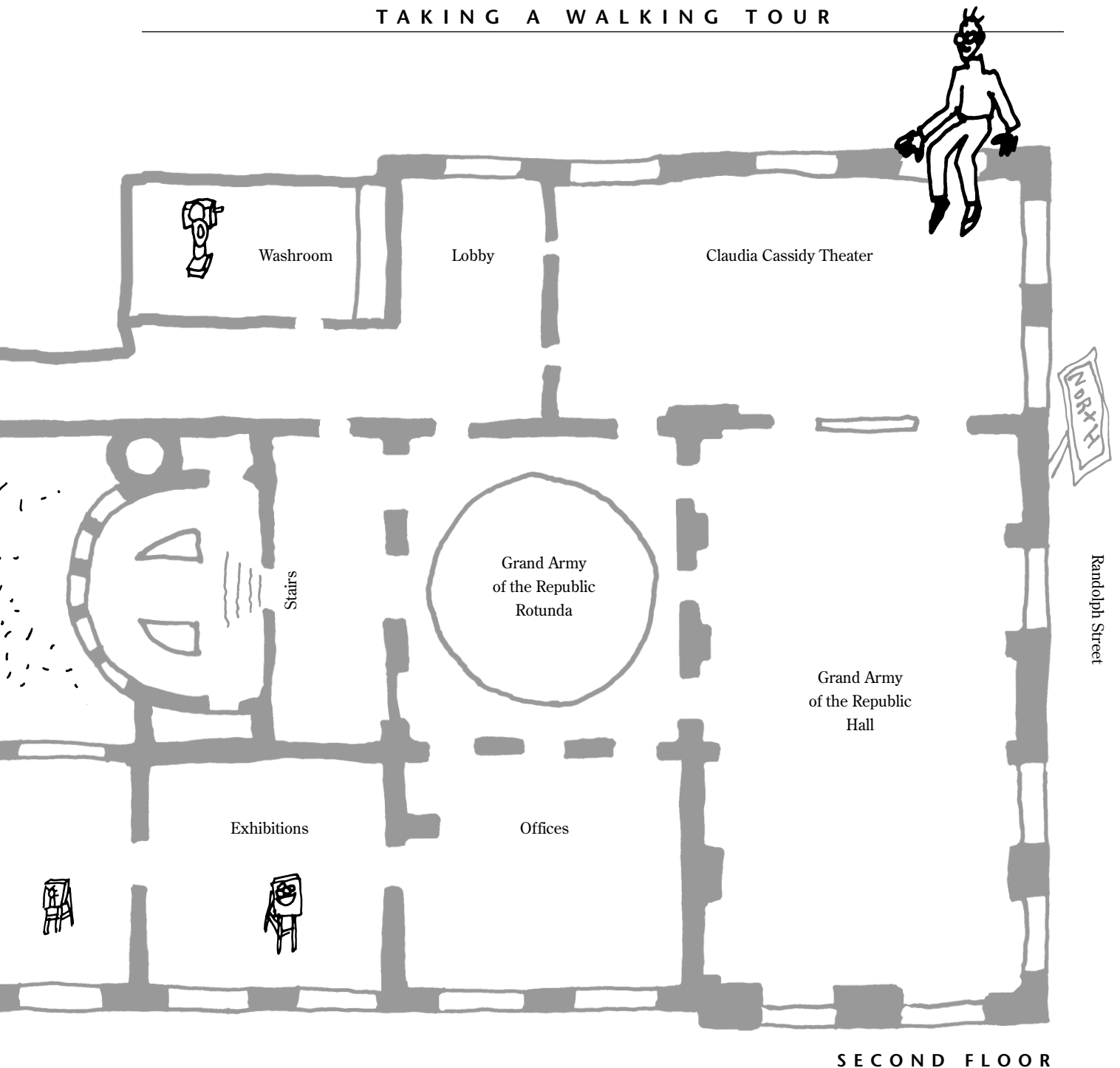
TAKING A WALKING TOUR

Time to explore!



Now that we know about architecture and the history of this building, it's time to look around. Are you ready to explore? Before we can do that, we have to find out where we are!

TAKING A WALKING TOUR



SECOND FLOOR

This is a floor plan of the places in the Chicago Cultural Center that we are going to visit. A floor plan is like a map that shows the location of each room in a building. To read this floor plan, pretend that the roof of the building has popped off, and you are a giant standing outside and peering down over the wall.

But we know that this building is different because it was built like two buildings under one roof, and this plan shows us a little of each. It shows us the third floor of the south side of the building and the second floor of the north side of the building, and most importantly, how to get from one side to another without using stairs.

Preston Bradley Hall is located on the third floor of the Cultural Center. Can you use the floor plan to find your way there?

Preston Bradley Hall. It was a m

If you can find these things, you are in the right place!



A stained glass dome with a fish scale pattern. (Hint: Look straight up!)

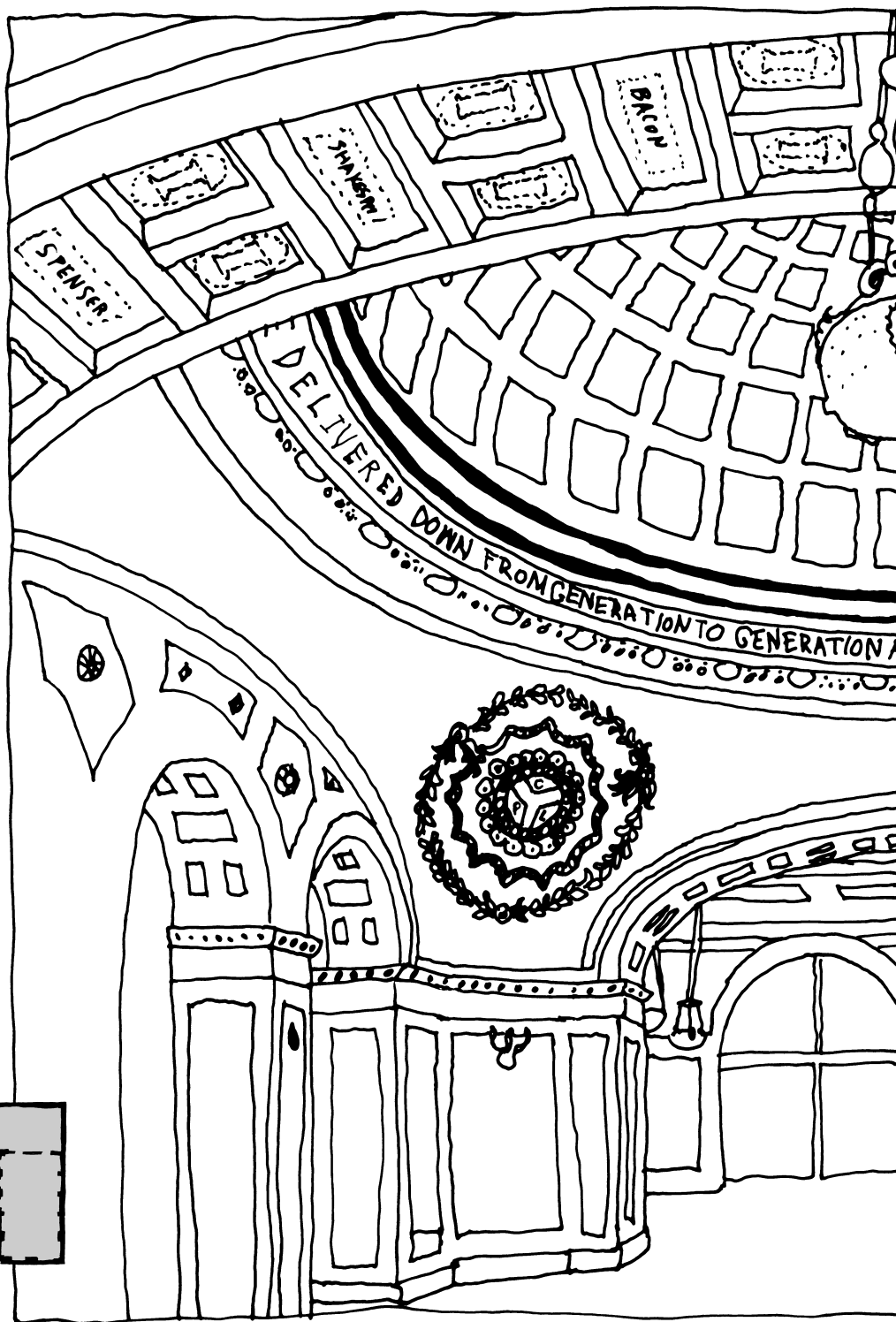
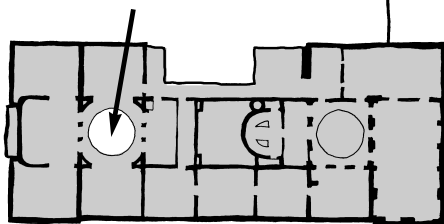


Walls filled with a mosaic pattern of flowers and leaves. (It sparkles!)



Two fish in a circle. (They're tangled!)

You are here.

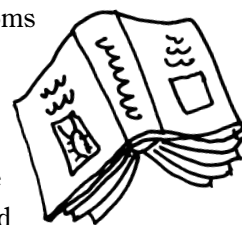


magnificent place to read a book.



Back when this was the Chicago Public Library, people came to this room to check out their books. In the 1890s, books were very expensive and so they were stored in rooms that were not open to the public. If you were checking out a book here one hundred years ago, you would look up your book in the card catalog (remember, computers were not invented yet) and hand a written request to a librarian. The librarian would then find your book in the storage rooms and bring it out to you.

Look for the brown boxes in the corners of this room. These were originally elevators used by the librarians to reach the book stacks. They don't work any more. Too bad!



What's in a name?

Preston Bradley Hall is named after a famous Chicagoan who was a member of the Chicago Public Library board for 45 years and a great lover of books. He carried books wherever he went and inspired many people to read.

Now stand directly under the dome, look up, turn around in a circle, and read the sentence in big gold letters at the base of the dome.

“Books are the legacies that a great genius leaves to mankind which are delivered down from generation to generation as presents to the posterity of those who are yet unborn.” — A D D I S O N

Huh? It's a fancy way of saying “BOOKS ARE GREAT!”



Famous Names

Take a few minutes to walk around this room. Look at the decorations on the walls, ceilings and the dome. You can tell that Preston Bradley Hall was originally built as part of a library, because the names of important western writers, philosophers, and inventors can be found beneath the east and west arches. (Shakespere—it's spelled funny—Newton, Chaucer, Galileo, and Dante, just to name a few.) Books written by these great thinkers could be found in the library.



Symbols

The designers also included the symbol above: (It's in the north east corner, just under the dome.) Can you guess what this stands for? It is the symbol of the Chicago Public Library (CPL). The Y shape is for the Chicago River with its two branches.

Add a name!

If you could choose a name to be included among the famous names embedded in the mosaics of Preston Bradley Hall, whose would it be? Your best friend, your teacher, your favorite story book character?

I hereby nominate

(write the name of your choice here)

whose name shall be forever remembered, admired and preserved in the walls of Preston Bradley Hall at the Chicago Cultural Center. This person is worthy of this great honor because (explain why you've chosen this person here)

Around the world in a room.

Within the mosaics at both the north and south ends of Preston Bradley Hall are quotes in ten languages about the importance of reading and the value of books. This tells us that people all over the world love to read as much as the people in Chicago do!

EGYPTIAN:

*I will make thee to love literature thy mother;
I will make its beauties pass before thee.*

—PROVERBS OF TUAUU-SE-KHARTAI

FRENCH:

*Men are equal; it is not birth but worth
that makes the difference.*

—VOLTAIRE

HEBREW:

*And the book is delivered unto him that is
not learned, saying, read this, I pray thee.*

—ISAIAH XXIX:12

ITALIAN:

*Open thy mind to what I unfold
And give it inward keeping, Knowledge comes
Of learning well retain'd unfruitful else.*

—DANTE

PERSIAN:

*They who by genius and by power of brain
The rank of man's enlighteners attain,
Not even they emerge from this dark night
But tell their dreams and fall asleep again.*

—OMAR KHAYYAM

LATIN:

*Whatever things were written aforetime
were written for our learning. Rom. XV:4*

—VULGATE

CHINESE:

*He who from day to day recognizes
what he has not yet,
and from month to month does not forget
what he has attained to, may be said indeed
to love to learn.*

—CONFUCIOUS

GERMAN:

*Oh, sweet voice! Much welcome sound
Of mother tongue in foreign land.*

—GOETHE

SPANISH:

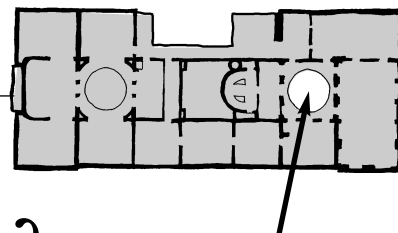
*Does the scholar cease his learning?
The more he knows, the more his yearning.*

—YIARTE

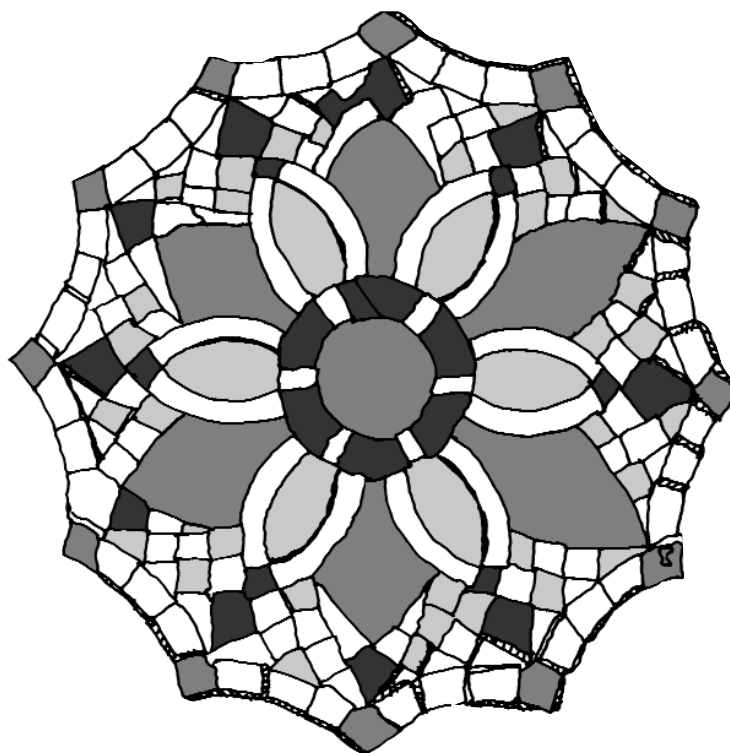
GREEK:

*The advice which their friends have not
the courage to give to kings is found written
in books.*

—PLUTARCH



Precious Materials. Can you find this design?



Go over to one of the walls where there is a mosaic pattern you can reach. The white material that covers the walls is marble which came all the way from Italy. Touch it with your fingers (yes, it's ok to touch here!). Does it feel warm or cool?

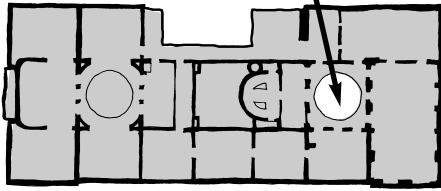
Now touch a part of the mosaic. Can you feel that it is made out of many small pieces?

Now use the floor plan to find your way to the G.A.R. Rotunda.

The mosaics in this room are made out of many materials including marble, mother of pearl (that's the shiny stuff inside a sea shell), colored glass and real gold! When all of these little pieces were set into the mosaic, they were placed at angles so that when the light hits them, they twinkle and sparkle!

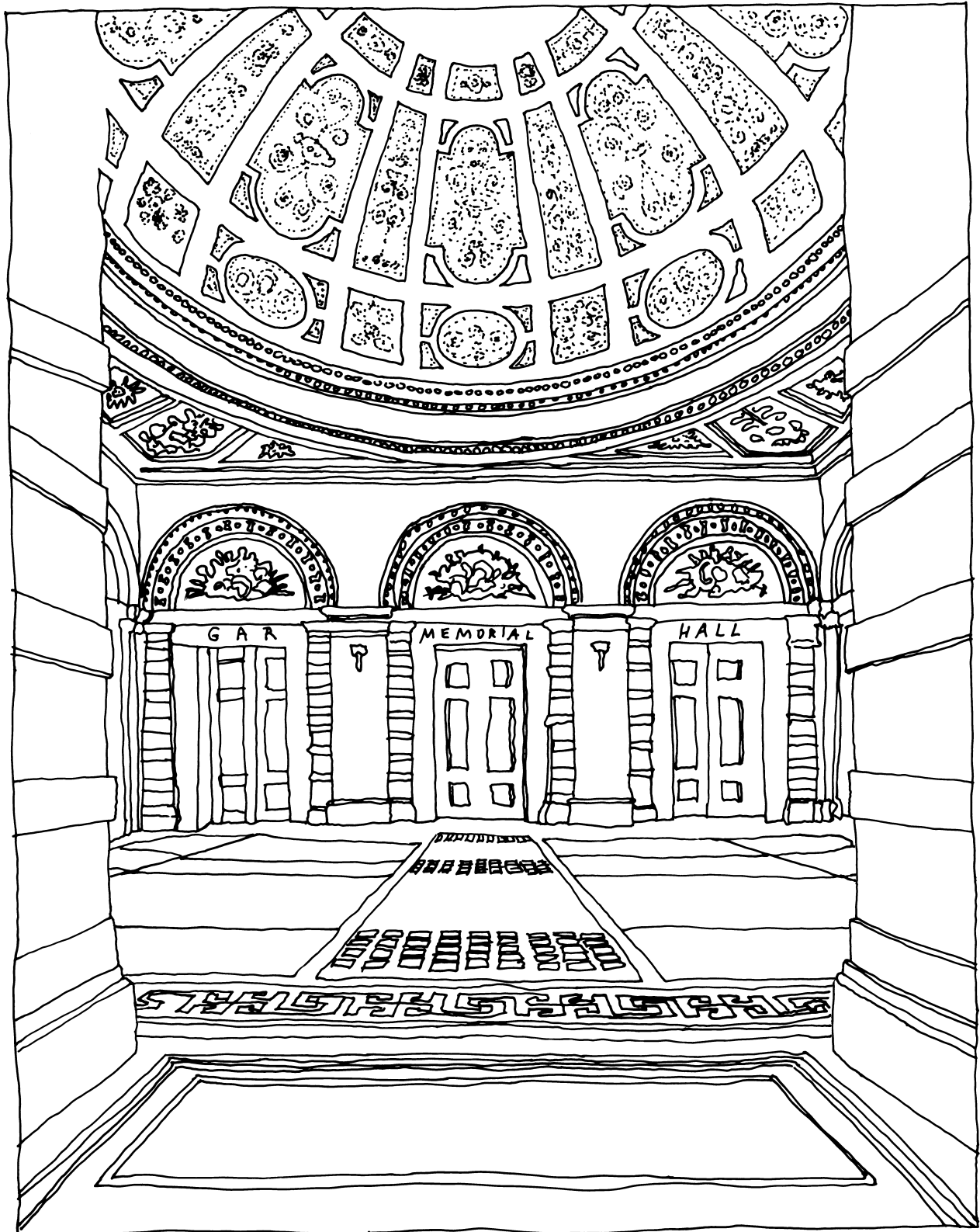
Mosaics have been used to decorate buildings and objects since ancient times. The Greeks created beautiful floor designs using water-worn pebbles in various colors. Native Americans of Central America developed a mosaic technique using turquoise to decorate masks, shields, small statues, and even earplugs!

You are here.



TAKING A WA

Grand Army of the Rep



Public Rotunda and Hall

Are you there yet? Look for these things to make sure!



Square glass tiles at your feet.

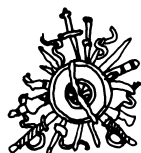
Orange flowers over head.

Swords, shields and helmets above your head.



Doors on every wall.

Big letters above the doors.



You have entered the side of the building that was originally built for the Grand Army of the Republic. Keep in mind that the architect wanted this side of the building to look very different from the Chicago Public Library's side. How does this room look different from Preston Bradley Hall? How is it similar? Can you find more fish scales?

A way to remember those who risked their lives.

The G.A.R. Rotunda was created as a memorial to the Union Army, the soldiers who fought for the north in the American Civil War. It was a way to thank them for their service and to remember always the sacrifices they made.

In each of the four corners of the ceiling there is a picture of the Union Army flag.

Now walk straight ahead into the GAR Hall. Look at the words set in the marble above the doors. Shilo, Antietam, Gettysburg, Cedar Creek, etc. These are the names of some of the battles that the Union Army won during the Civil War.

Don't forget to look up at the ceiling. Notice how it is decorated with a series of geometric shapes (squares, rectangles, hexagons, etc.) that are set into the ceiling and encrusted with dragons, fruit, stars and other designs!



Words that tell it all.

Here are some words that you can use to describe a building, room or place you have visited. These words allow you to say how the space looks and feels to you. Circle the words that you think best describe places you have been in the Chicago Cultural Center.

old comfortable _____ new

crowded welcoming rough happy

plain _____ quiet private hot

open closed cold short

public narrow _____ bright

artificial colorful empty clean dark wide

loud tall _____ balanced

smooth forbidding dirty scary special

different _____ sparkly fancy

confusing sad _____ uneven

Can you think of any other words that describe the Chicago Cultural Center?
Write them on the lines above.